THE MORAL BASIS OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

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LORD ROBERT CECIL

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THE ESSEX HALL LECTURE, 1923

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BY THE
RT. HON. LORD ROBERT CECIL, K.C., M.P.
H.M. Lord Privy Seal

With an Appendix on the Work of the League

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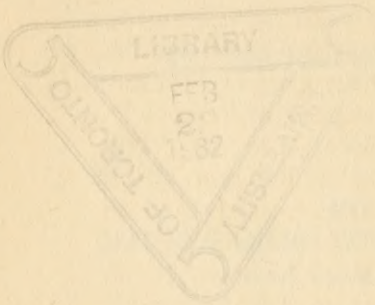

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PREFACE

THE Essex Hall Lecture was founded in order to provide an opportunity for a public utterance on a subject of fundamental religious importance, by a selected speaker, with entire freedom of treatment. Among the Lecturers in recent years have been the Rev. W. R. Inge, D.D., Dean of St. Paul's, on "The Religious Philosophy of Plotinus and some Modern Philosophies of Religion"; Mr. Claude G. Montefiore, M.A., on "The Place of Judaism among the Religions of the World"; the Rev. Charles Gore, D.D., late Bishop of Oxford, on "Christianity applied to the Life of Men and of Nations"; the Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, on "Orthodoxy"; and Dr. L. P. Jacks, Editor of the *Hibbert Journal*, on "The Lost Radiance of the Christian Religion."

Few readers will question the propriety of including the subject of the present Lecture within the scope of applied Religion, and, we may add, of applied Christianity. The League of Nations is a great experiment in international co-operation; and its aim is in essential harmony with the Gospel message of the Brotherhood of Man.

PREFACE

Lord Robert Cecil's Lecture is an exposition and defence of fundamental principles: and, with his approval, an Appendix has been added on the actual work of the League down to August, 1923.

The Covenant of the League of Nations contemplated a world where all States were within the League and were working for the common purposes of international friendship and peace. The actual position is very different. The world is not stable. The internal situation of Germany is far from secure. The new States are inexperienced in the art of Government and are full of fears about their future, while many of their subjects are smarting under a sense of injustice and wrong. America, Germany, and Russia are still outside the League; and until they are inside, the security of the world will remain in jeopardy. The difficulties which confront Statesmen have recently been illustrated in the conflict between Greece and Turkey, in the problems arising out of the military occupation of the Ruhr, and in the perplexing questions affecting India, Egypt, and other lands.

Under these conditions, watched by

powerful and hostile critics, the League has by arbitration or by special Commissions solved more than one problem which, if left to itself, might well have become the cause of estrangement and even of war between two States. It has probably succeeded in saving Austria from complete internal collapse. It has formed a centre and provided the machinery for dealing with such matters as the repatriation of prisoners of war and the provision of help for countless thousands of refugees. It has done much in combating disease, especially such as threatened to spread through Europe from Russia. All this it has done, and more; and these achievements, by themselves, provide ample justification for the labour and expense involved in maintaining the League.

The League is, however, a living organization: and the value of a living organism depends not only on what it is but on what it is capable of becoming. From this point of view, activities of the League which appear to be merely tentative acquire a deeper significance; and it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the concrete proposals, now under consideration, by

which arrangements for a general limitation of armaments may be linked on to a Treaty of Mutual Guarantee for the security of nations.

The principle of religious liberty, as it is understood and applied within the British Empire, is scarcely comprehended by some of the States which under recent Treaties are pledged to its adoption: and the sustained vigilance of the Council of the League will be required to secure the effective administration of those clauses which grant full liberty of language and religion to minorities.

This Lecture is published as a contribution to that "moral disarmament" which the Assembly of the League of Nations has declared to be the first condition of material disarmament, and which can only be achieved in an atmosphere of mutual confidence and goodwill.

S. H. MELLONE.

ESSEX HALL,
LONDON, W.C. 2,
August, 1923.

THE MORAL BASIS OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

IT is peculiarly appropriate that this lecture should be delivered on Empire Day. The British Empire is not only a political entity, it is a great example of how nations can be held together without force, merely by the desire to co-operate for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the Empire and for the advancement of humanity at large.

It may seem scarcely necessary to prove a truth so obvious as that the League of Nations must have a moral basis. The League of Nations stands for peace as opposed to war, for co-operation between the nations as opposed to hostility; and it does not

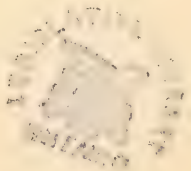
seem possible for anyone, however prejudiced he may be, to doubt that there is a moral basis for such a movement as that. And yet the conclusion is not quite so clear as it appears to be on the surface. Certain it is—and we must recognize it as a fact—that there are good men and women who are opposed to the League of Nations. There are probably many more who regard it with indifference, or as a political experiment of no great importance or promise, and as to which, at any rate, they desire to reserve their judgment.

There are a certain number of such people in this country, and there are more of them in other countries. I have just returned from a visit[1] to another country very closely allied to us in speech and in methods of thought —the United States of America. In that country a great many people are either doubtful about the League or

[1] May, 1923.

hostile to it. This is a fact, and these people are neither criminals nor lunatics; on the contrary, many of them are excellent men and women. It is extremely important that we should understand the causes which have created such an attitude and the reasons which are advanced in its defence.

Some current opinions adverse to the League spring from an assumption that the maxims of morality, and especially the maxims of Christian morality, do not apply to the relations between States, as they apply to the relations between individuals. The argument, when it is openly stated and defended, is usually of this kind: "Individuals are morally bound to be unselfish, not to press their claims unduly, and to be ready to sacrifice themselves if necessary for others. But when we think of the State"—this is the argument—"we must not be misled by the phrase. We must not think of the State as if it were an individual. We must remem-



ber how in fact it is directed. Every State is governed and guided by a small number of men; sometimes, of course, by an Absolute Sovereign, but more frequently by a Committee of Ministers, or other body of men, whose business it is to look after the interests of the great mass of the people over whom they rule. It is all very well to talk about Christian duties, or even moral duties," the critic argues, " but these Ministers have no right to be generous at the expense of the people they govern. If they are, they are not carrying out the principles of morality, for morality commands them, in the first place, to be faithful to their trust; and their trust is to do the best they can for the people they have been selected to guide."

This is one version of an assumption which is frequently held. It is not the only version; there are others of a more metaphysical nature, which I do not propose to consider on this occasion

There are two answers. In the first place it may be said, and said, I think, with great truth, that in the end it is better, in the interests of the people, that their rulers should act according to the principles of morality applied to the nation as if it were an individual. What I mean is this. If a nation acquires a reputation for being untrustworthy, treacherous, or cruel, or for other great lapses in morality, it will not be successful in the end, for the masses of the people will discover that a reputation of that kind is hostile to their interests. They will discover that it is better, even on strictly selfish grounds, to sacrifice some immediate advantage in order to observe the broad rules of morality, of justice and even of generosity, in dealing with other nations. And therefore a Statesman who accepts to the full the position —which, of course, he must accept— that he is a Trustee for the welfare of his fellow-countrymen, will yet do well

to guide their policy in accordance with the rules of morality, because, in the end, however it may appear for the moment, it will be of the greatest advantage to the people concerned.

This is one answer, and I believe it to be a true answer. But for reasons which I shall give directly, I do not accept it as the most fundamentally true answer.

The other answer is this. I am prepared to say that the State is an individual, a moral individual, and is subject as such to the moral law. I believe that through the development of a mysterious but essential capacity of our nature, human beings can join together and make themselves, for one reason or another, into a corporate whole; and having done so, they assume a new character, ceasing to be wholly and solely an aggregation of units, and becoming a new entity, subject to its own moral laws and moral duties.

I prefer this answer, though it may appear somewhat abstract, because I believe it to be more in accordance with reality. As a matter of fact, we all feel that we desire our country to act up to the highest standard, not so much because it will be most profitable to us in the long run, but because we want to feel that we are part of an honourable, upright, chivalrous, generous Nation. I believe that this is a very deep and pervasive feeling, which no amount of reasoning can shake. No one likes to hear his country spoken of as having done a treacherous thing or taken a mean advantage. Looking at it then from this point of view, a Statesman who believes himself to be a Trustee must realize the feeling which pervades the population of every country. It is, that they desire their policies to be conducted not only for their immediate advantage, but in such a way as to preserve the national honour and the national reputation.

There are many reasons in favour of this answer to the argument that the State has no moral responsibility. Among other reasons, it provides a much easier and safer guide to practical policy. A form of statecraft may be defended on the strictly utilitarian ground of what will be for the greatest immediate advantage of the State, and this consideration theoretically may perhaps produce the same results, if carried out with great wisdom and great circumspection, as the simpler method of trying to do the right and generous and honourable thing: but it is much more likely to lead the nation into error and disaster.

We have seen this in modern times in the influence of the school of which Treitschke and Bernhardi are the best known exponents. Their conception was, that German policy must be guided solely by the direct and immediate self-interest of the German State. Such a policy is not only immoral, it

is foolish and futile to the last degree. It ultimately produced the ruin of Germany. I believe it will always have this effect. You will not easily find men who are so far-seeing as to carry out a policy of national self-interest and nothing else, without making grave mistakes in their policy, and ultimately doing the very opposite of that which they set out to do.

I have endeavoured to deal with a theoretic objection to the League of Nations, which I believe to be not very widely and seriously held. I believe that very few people are really prepared to deny that the Rulers of States should be guided by the rules of morality in their actions towards other States. Most people admit that they ought to be so guided, and that part of the national policy should be the pursuit of justice, honour, generosity, and mercy.

There is, however, a more serious difficulty to be considered before we come to the solution which I favour.

It is more serious because there is much more truth in it. In fact, apart from a League of Nations or some such scheme, it is insuperable. We may put it thus. The critics say: "Yes, we wish for an honourable and a just policy; we do not want our country to do what is not right. But who is to enforce what is right? With individuals the matter is simple; we can go to a Court of Law; we can call upon the whole power of the State to enforce what is right and just. We can afford to be 'peaceable' and 'law-abiding'; we can abandon the effort to take the law into our own hands, and to secure justice for ourselves by our own efforts alone, because we have a recognised authority to which we may appeal. But with nations it is not so. They have nothing to which they can appeal except their own strength; and if they are to secure justice and prevent oppression, if they are to insist on the sanctity of contracts and on the

authority of truth and mercy, if they are to make these principles govern the relations between States, they must do it themselves. There is no other power to do it for them."

Apart from some effective international organization, this contention is absolutely true. The nations *taken as separate units* live in a condition of complete anarchy. There is no government, there is no real law, there is merely a set of principles, which each nation must enforce for itself, if it wants to have them enforced: and even self-preservation and justice, for self or for others, can only be secured by the strong hand of the nation which has the will to make these principles effective.

We must, therefore, admit that without some kind of international organization which can take the place of force, and which the nations can trust, they will continue to live in a condition of anarchy; and the only way by which they can enforce the claims of right is by

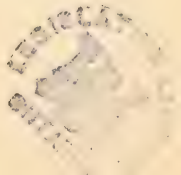
force of arms. Since we are inquiring into a moral basis, we may disregard the proposition that international anarchy is right. It clearly is not right. It is a most deplorable and disastrous condition of affairs.

In the first place, international anarchy means that even self-preservation must depend on mere strength. That may be very satisfactory for a powerful nation, but it is a miserable doctrine for the smaller nations of the world. One of the objections to the League of Nations is that it threatens national independence. But what can be more disastrous to independence than for the small nations to be dependent on some stronger Power to save them from extermination? The doctrine of anarchy and force is absolutely inconsistent with any real independent life, particularly of the smaller nations.

I think it is worse than that. If we are to rely on each nation enforcing what it thinks to be right, then each nation

is made a judge in its own court. We in this country hold very strongly that it is vital for our tribunals to be absolutely independent of any prejudice in favour of one side or the other; and to say that right and justice as between nations are to be enforced by each nation of itself, is to make each nation a judge in its own court. Such a procedure produces, and will produce, disastrous results wherever it is tried. I do not wish to go into a politically controversial subject, but I believe that the failure to recognize the evil of this principle in the Treaty of Versailles and other Treaties is responsible for much of the unrest in the world to-day.

Above all, there is this fatal objection to the doctrine of international anarchy. It makes justice and right dependent on the fortunes of war. We have in our own individual relations abandoned for centuries the idea that the ordeal of battle or duel is a satisfactory way of enforcing the claims of justice and



right. We no longer think that the man who can fence most skilfully, or shoot the straightest, is likely to be right in his quarrel. It is just the same with nations. There is no ground for thinking that the nation which has had the best military training, and has spent the greatest amount of time and money and effort in constructing engines of destruction, is necessarily morally superior to the nations which have spent less. Therefore I do not think we need occupy further time in discussing whether international anarchy is right, for clearly it is wrong, and disastrous in the highest degree.

A much more serious question now arises. Is there anything else to take the place of international anarchy? I am dealing with the moral aspect of things. I make no detailed reference to the destruction which will inevitably come upon the world unless we find some alternative; but I ask you, purely from the point of view of moral

right, to consider whether it is really true that there is nothing else we can put in place of this doctrine of the strong arm.

I agree that it is a very difficult matter to construct any organization of the nations comparable to the organization of individuals in States. I do not think it is practicable to create a Super-state which shall have such overwhelming strength behind it, that apart from other agencies, by mere force, it can compel the obedience of all the nations to its commands. I believe that this is impracticable, and I think at present any attempt to establish it would be disastrous. But I am not sure that we ought not, in passing, to sound a note of doubt as to whether in the end it is true that the basis of a State depends upon its overwhelming force, or whether it is not much more true to say that it depends on the general agreement of the whole of the inhabitants of the State, that certain

rules shall be obeyed by themselves.

I must assume, however, that the machinery of a Super-state is impracticable, and for the reason that it is impossible to construct any international organization with overwhelming force, and with an authority that would command the respect of all the governments who compose it. We must, therefore, look for something else, which will take the place of international anarchy on the one hand, and which will not go as far as the creation of a Super-state on the other. And I venture to believe that the experiment now being tried in the League of Nations is on the right line. That is to say, we aim at a universal agreement among the nations, to which all nations shall be committed in principle, working not by force, but by the operation of the public opinion of the world as the requisite sanction.

Undoubtedly public opinion is an enormous force, even among individ-

uals. We speak of the police and the law as working by compulsion and force, but it is not really so. The great weapon of the law in a community such as ours, for example, is not physical coercion or punishment, but the disgrace which disobedience to the law brings upon the offender. That is what people really dread, and unless disgrace accompanies legal punishment, legal punishment has not a hundredth part of its effectiveness. That fact, every one will admit, lies at the basis of a great deal of the discussion which is now proceeding as to the value of slight or severe punishments. The truth is that, within limits—I am not dealing with extravagant cases—it does not much matter whether the punishment is slight or severe, provided it is one that conveys the moral reprobation and moral inhibition of society, and operates as a kind of moral ostracism upon the individual who suffers it. When therefore some great national

feeling has removed from the government of a country its moral authority, as we have seen, I regret to say, in many countries, some of them quite near to us, then the law ceases to have the effect of repressing crime or of keeping order. Or again where, owing to the state of public opinion, a particular breach of the law is not regarded as disgraceful, then it is useless to send the offenders to prison. It does not deter; it does not shock people. In some countries where it is illegal to sell intoxicating liquor, and where that illegality is not endorsed by the great mass of public opinion, it does not really operate as a great deterrent to send a man or woman to prison for a few days or a few weeks. And, in point of fact, we see it in another instance still more strongly. Any practitioner in the criminal courts will tell you that the great mass of people tried, are people who have been convicted before. When I was sitting as

Chairman of Quarter Sessions, four out of five of the persons who came before us were men and women who had frequently been in gaol before, and against whom therefore the element of disgrace no longer operated. They had lost their character. It meant little to them, from that point of view, and consequently gaol or punishment had no deterrent effect upon them. It is against the people who never commit crime that the law is strong, and the reason is because the disgrace attaching to conviction is very great. The public opinion of the great mass of the community is against lawlessness and crime.

This is the first thing to be achieved if we are to suppress war. At present war is not disgraceful among nations. It is not regarded as a crime. The only people who condemn it are the people who are beaten; the victors scarcely ever condemn war, or if they do, it is under their breath. Until war in itself becomes disgraceful, we shall

not get our organization of public opinion, which is, after all, the great force on which civilization depends. War is not yet regarded as a disgraceful thing because at present war is the only means given to the nations of enforcing right and justice. And since the combatants in a war always maintain that their side is just and right, and the only test as to which is just and right is success in war, it is evident that the successful country will never be condemned.

I found in America that many people believe the Covenant of the League of Nations to be defective because it does not condemn war with sufficient clearness and definiteness. There is in that country a movement for what is called the "Outlawry of War." I do not argue whether it is feasible and right in all its details, but its central idea is attractive. The first thing to do is to condemn war, to make it a crime, to outlaw it by some great international

declaration to which all nations will agree. There are practical difficulties in the way, but I believe that this movement proceeds from sound principles fundamentally. Our only real weapon against war is public opinion, and we cannot get public opinion to operate until we have established the broad principle that aggressive war is an international crime, and ought to be so regarded.

It is evident that if this principle is to be established, we must provide for justice in some other way. We must make use of the force of public opinion, organized in such a way as not only to prevent war but also to secure justice. We cannot leave injustice unpunished, and wickedness triumphant among the nations; and if we are to take away from them, as I think we must, the right to enforce justice for themselves, then we must give to them some other means of securing that they are not subjected to injustice from others.

These two ideas—the effective prevention of war and the effective establishment of international justice—lie at the foundation of the Covenant of the League of Nations, whether perfectly carried out by the Covenant or not. And they are really, so far as war is concerned, the root from which the central idea springs. The central idea of the Covenant is this: that we shall prevent nations resorting to war against one another, until there has been every opportunity of settling the dispute by other means. That is to say, war is to be postponed until public opinion, properly organized and properly applied, has had an opportunity of settling the dispute.

I am not sure that this goes far enough. I believe it goes as far as we can go at this moment, until we have carried out another great international reform—the most urgent task now lying before us: and that is disarmament or the reduction of armaments.

As long as we leave it possible for nations to accumulate masses of armaments, particularly as long as we leave it possible for them to enter into competition in armaments with one another, I believe it will be useless to hope that any international arrangements which we can make will prevent nations from using those armaments for their self-preservation or the enforcement of what they believe to be their just claims, in times of great national excitement, when they believe they are suffering from serious injustice or are seriously threatened by their neighbours. I believe that just as we never really succeed in securing a peaceful community until we can persuade the people to go about without arms in their hands, so we shall never secure a peaceful world until we can persuade nations to go about, at any rate, with no more arms than are necessary for the purpose of internal order and defence. And in the present state of

international fear and suspicion, when every continental nation regards itself as in possible danger from one or more of its neighbours, it is impossible to expect them to lay down their arms, or even to retain them on a common plan, unless we provide for general protection from aggression by any one nation.

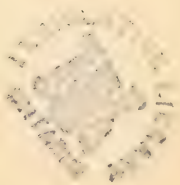
I do not, therefore, believe that we can hope immediately and finally to destroy all possibility of war; but I do believe that in practice and as a practical matter, public opinion, properly organized and properly applied, is strong enough to safeguard the peace of the world, and to prevent international aggression. The League of Nations is based on this assumption. And its first principle is that before the nations fight they shall agree to a period of from six to nine months during which the causes of dispute shall be investigated before an impartial tribunal, and above all, shall be investigated in public, so that the world shall judge.

This is a matter to which I attach the utmost importance. The more I have to do with the affairs of the League, the more convinced I am that the greater the publicity, the greater the probability of the League's success.

And so far, let us take courage from the fact that, on the whole, the League is working well. I do not say that it has not made mistakes, or that its machinery is perfect, or that all the decisions and the settlements which it has produced are beyond criticism. I certainly do not say that they will not be criticized by one or other of the parties to the dispute. Indeed, it is obvious that they will be criticized by one, and probably by both, of them. But I do say that on the whole the machinery of the League has worked well, that, where it has been given a fair opportunity, it has produced peace, and, in the vast majority of cases, not only outward and external peace, but a real fundamental drawing together of

the nations in dispute. In the best cases, it has actually, as far as we can see, obliterated the whole bitterness which existed before; and in other cases it has, with very few exceptions, produced a real settlement which is likely to endure. And therefore I say that it works. And I am convinced that it will work. I believe that it requires only one thing to make it work in all cases, even in the greatest and most difficult cases: and that is, that people shall believe in it. I am not, I hope, an unpractical idealist. I would willingly be an idealist, but I do not want to be an unpractical idealist. I recognize that we must walk before we run, that Rome was not built in a day, and that all such other maxims of our forefathers are true and important. But we cannot stand still. We must either advance or recede. We must be cautious, but we must be prepared to take risks in situations which are serious, if not desperate.

In this connection I venture to point out the enormous importance of the Article XI, which is perhaps the most typical of all the Articles in the whole Covenant of the League. It is the whole philosophy of the League in three or four lines. The Article declares that "it is the friendly right of any member of the League to bring to the attention of the Council or Assembly of the League, any matter which threatens the peace of the world, or the good understanding of the nations upon which peace depends." That is to say, it is required that any difficulty or dispute shall be discussed openly before the world, in the atmosphere of the League, and in the Council or Assembly of the League. This means nothing less than the claim that these things shall be brought into the open and discussed before the bar of the public opinion of the world. I believe that this is the essential thing really requiring to be done even more than



anything else provided for in the Covenant. And I believe further, that if such provision had existed in 1914, the world would have been spared an incalculable amount of suffering and waste.

This, broadly speaking, is the policy of the League. It is the only possible way of advance, and I believe that it is practicable. I am sure that it is immeasurably superior to international anarchy, which is the only alternative.

In this sense the policy of the League is a policy to prevent war. So far, it is a negative policy; and a negative policy is not enough. The negative commandment, "Thou shall not kill" must be completed by the positive commandment "Love one another." Among nations it is not enough to prevent war. We must foster and encourage good-will between the nations of the world, and bring it into effective operation.

No political machinery can accomplish this. It is not within the com-

pass of any Covenant, though a Covenant may do something. It is a moral question which depends on other agencies far more powerful, though far less manageable, than the machinery of Conferences or Assemblies. But still something may be done. We can create the atmosphere in which such agencies can work. We can encourage international co-operation. We can secure that those nations which really desire international brotherhood and good-will among men shall have an opportunity of carrying out their plans. This part of the work of the League seems to me to have been hitherto successful. The mere existence of the Assembly is a great achievement. The mere bringing together of representatives of all the different nations and languages and religions into one room, and asking them to sit down together and examine world-questions, not in the interests of individual nations, but as they affect the prosperity and progress

of mankind, this, I repeat, is a great thing, and produces a great effect. Anyone who has attended the Conferences at Geneva realizes the far-reaching effect produced by such meetings of the representatives of the different nations, gathering together and working for common objects.

I remember well the first Assembly, when the League began to have a real existence, and began to work for great causes. I remember when it began to consider what could be done to save the suffering populations of Armenia. It was not in any way the selfish interest of any nation represented there. It was a common altruistic object, and therefore it brought all the nations together, anxious to do their best. In the recent history of the League, and especially in its last Assembly, nothing has been more admirable than the joint effort made by so many nations to come to the assistance of Austria, not only because it was of value to this or that

nation that Austria should not be allowed to fall into chaos, but because they felt the appeal of a nation in distress, and because they thought it was the duty of the League, as a League and as representing international opinion, to do its best to rescue a nation which was in dire straits and in danger of falling finally into the abyss. It was a great effort, and I believe it is going to be a successful effort. But even if it failed, it has been a great thing that such an effort has been made.

There have been many other things in which the members of the League have worked together for common objects, recognizing the great truth that the nations are far more interested in common objects than they are affected by diverse hostilities. The opium question, the release of prisoners of war, the attack on the white slave traffic, and a large number of other activities which are not so well known, but which represent valuable efforts of

international co-operation, have made it possible for something like a spirit of international amity to exist; and no one who has attended the Assemblies at Geneva can fail to recognize that an atmosphere has been created there, in which international disputes lose their bitterness, and their solutions become possible without disaster or humiliation to either of the contestants.

What, then, is the conclusion? It is this. The League can work. It has proved that public opinion and international co-operation are and have been weapons against war, and that peace can be secured by their means. And if this is so, if there is even a "one per cent chance" of its being so, then surely to secure the success of the experiment is worth any effort that can be made. Nevertheless, I believe that there is much more than a "one per cent chance." I believe that there is a reasonable certainty of success, if we, the people of this country and of other

countries, really desire peace and mean peace.

This brings to light the real obstacle which the people of the United States feel to be in the way of their participation in European affairs. I found this feeling among them. They say, "You do not really desire peace and mean peace; you are still training your men, quarrelling and fighting, heaping up armaments and making secret treaties. Convince us that you really desire to live at peace with one another, and we will consider in a very different light your suggestions of international co-operation with us." That is true. It depends on ourselves. It depends on this country and on other countries, and not on countries in the abstract, but on the individuals who make up those countries. What do they really want? This is what they have to make clear to themselves. If they are not going to work at this task of international co-operation, if they are not

going to make it a success, a new war is as certain as anything can be in human affairs. And what does that mean? Who can doubt—if he gives it five minutes' thought, or one-tenth part of the attention which he gives to his own affairs—that new wars will mean the destruction of economic civilization, that they will mean the loss of all the achievements of art and culture, and a return to the barbarism of the seventh and eighth centuries?

And what more? Can we doubt that with the loss of all these material advantages we shall also have a deep moral degradation? Let us not be deceived by the splendours of courage and self-sacrifice which war brings forth. There is no evil, however terrible, that is not accompanied by good. Indeed, by the reaction which evil creates inevitably in human affairs, it may be said that it produces good. But war is none the less evil. Self-sacrifice is not the object of war. It

may be, and often is, an incident of war; but the object of war is slaughter and destruction of the enemy, with as little loss to ourselves as possible. Individual acts of heroism are not the rule in war, but the exception, and the more perfect the machinery becomes, the less will such acts count. Bombing towns from the air, poisoning masses of the civilian population, torpedoing commercial vessels at night, and blowing to pieces millions of the most promising young citizens of the enemy State,—these are not elevating and ennobling pursuits, nor does history in the past show that they have had any ennobling effect. True, men are found —and let us rejoice at it—whose moral nature is so strong that they can pass through such experiences without injury, and be all the stronger for them; but we have no right to count on that occurring, and no true account of what happened when a town was bombed, or a country overrun, or a battle fought,

will show that heroes, moral as well as physical, are the ordinary creation of war. Let us pursue without wavering our quest for peace, and since the League of Nations is the only alternative to war, let us not hesitate to labour with all our might to see that this great experiment in humanity receives the support of the peoples of all the nations of the world.

APPENDIX

THE WORK OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

THE Covenant of the League of Nations constitutes Part I. of the principal Treaties drawn up by the Representatives of the Allied and Associated Powers (the United States of America, Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and others) at the Peace Conference held in Paris at the conclusion of the Great War of 1914-18. It is Part I, therefore, of the Treaties of Peace between these Powers and (1) Germany, Versailles, June 28th, 1919; (2) Austria, St. Germain, September 10th, 1919; (3) Bulgaria, Neuilly, November 27th, 1919; and (4) Hungary, Trianon, June 14th, 1920. The Covenant took effect from the date of Deposit of the Instrument of Ratification by the Representatives of Germany on January 10th, 1920.

The work of the League is carried out through the instrumentality of an Assembly and a Council, with a permanent Secretariat. The Assembly consists of Representatives of the States which are members of the League. These now number fifty-two. At meetings of the Assembly each member has one vote, and may have not more than three Representatives. In the list of "Original members of the League of Nations Signatories of the Treaty of Peace," appended to the original Covenant, the first country mentioned is the United States of America. America is not,

however, at the present time a member of the League, because the Treaty containing the Covenant, though signed, has never been ratified by America, who accordingly has not taken the seat which still awaits her on the Council of the League. The League actually came into being with the first meeting of the Council on January 16th, 1920.

The Preamble to the Covenant states that the purpose of the League is "to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security, by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war, by the prescription of open just and honourable relations between nations, by the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments, and by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations in the dealings of organized peoples with one another." In the development of this general aim the work of the League is necessarily manifold; and the following review of some of the more important of its activities, down to August, 1923, will, it is hoped, form a useful appendix to the statement and defence of fundamental principles given by Lord Robert Cecil in his Essex Hall Lecture.

I. Limitation of Armaments.

i. The Problem.

It has been shown above that war is due in part to armaments, and that armaments are due to suspicion and fear. The sense of national insecurity is capable of transforming this elementary emotion into a deeply

rooted instinct acting blindly and disastrously. To remove the causes from which the sense of national insecurity springs, is to destroy the principal motive of the struggle to amass armaments.

Accordingly the League is pledged (by Article viii of the Covenant) to formulate plans for the reduction of armaments "to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations."

The problem is one of immense complexity. It involves, among many other difficulties, the control and prevention of the advance of scientific (*e.g.*, chemical) warfare, and the control of the traffic in arms. It also involves the collection of statistics as a basis for the complex task of the proportional reduction of national land forces after the model of the Treaty of Washington (November, 1921), where the Great Naval Powers of the World, of their own free will, agreed to limitations of their naval armaments.

This work has been entrusted to two Commissions acting in collaboration: the "Permanent Advisory Commission for Military, Naval, and Air Questions," consisting of experts in these subjects; and the "Temporary Mixed Commission," representing various branches of competent public opinion. These Commissions have investigated the general principles of land and air disarmament, and collected information on which action may be based.

At the third Assembly of the League, the Temporary Commission was able to make a Report containing concrete proposals, and among others a definite proposal put forward by Lord Robert Cecil, for a general

Treaty of Mutual Guarantee, to apply only to countries which have reduced their armaments to a specified level. To find this level it is necessary to lay down certain standards of military power.

ii. Declarations of Third Assembly.

Reports from the two Commissions were submitted to the Assembly and were ordered to be forwarded immediately to the various Governments for considerations, together with the Text of the Washington Treaty. The Commissions were instructed to continue their investigations, and the Council, after consultation with the Commissions, to formulate a plan of the machinery, political and military, necessary to give effect to the following principles:—

1. No scheme for the reduction of armaments, within the meaning of the Covenant, can be fully successful unless it is general.

2. In the present state of the world many Governments would be unable to accept the responsibility for a serious reduction of armaments, unless they received in exchange a satisfactory guarantee of the safety of their country.

3. Such a guarantee can be found in a defensive agreement which should be open to all countries, binding them to provide immediate and effective assistance, in accordance with a pre-conceived plan, in the event of one of them being attacked.

4. Previous consent to a general reduction of armaments would necessarily be the first condition for such a Treaty of Mutual Guarantee. This reduction could be carried out either by means of a general Treaty,

which is the most desirable plan, or by means of partial treaties designed to be extended and open to all countries.

The Assembly, considering that moral disarmament is an essential preliminary condition of material disarmament, and that this moral disarmament can only be secured in an atmosphere of mutual confidence and security, has declared: "That such confidence cannot be attained so long as the world continues to suffer from disorganisation of the exchanges, economic chaos, and unemployment: and that the only method of remedying these evils is to put an end to the uncertainty which prevails regarding the means for the restoration of the devastated regions and the settlement of inter-Allied debts." And the Council has been instructed to devote constant attention to every effort made in this direction by the Governments concerned, "it being understood that the Council can only usefully assist in the solution of these problems if requested to do so by the Governments in question."

iii. Draft Treaty of Guarantee.

In the meantime the Temporary Mixed Commission for the Reduction of Armaments, in pursuance of its appointed work, drafted a formal Treaty of Mutual Guarantee for facilitating the reduction of national armaments. In August, 1923, the Commission definitely adopted the Draft Treaty for submission to the Assembly in the following month.

In this Treaty, the High Contracting Parties, solemnly declaring that aggressive war is an international crime, severally undertake that none of them

will be guilty of its commission against another. They " jointly and severally undertake to furnish assistance " in specified ways " to any one of their number, should the latter, after having reduced its armaments in accordance with the Treaty, become the victim of aggression."

A situation may arise where a State, party to the Treaty, appears to have accumulated armaments in excess of those fixed under its provisions, or where the aggressive policy or military preparation of any State, party or not to the Treaty, cause one of the contracting parties to apprehend an outbreak of hostilities. Such a case, when judged by the Council of the League to give rise to a reasonable belief that a menace of aggression has arisen, may be treated as a case of actual aggression. Action against an aggressive Power is to be taken through the Council by means of specified military and economic measures.

The extent of reduction of armaments by each of the contracting States is to be proportional to the amount of security considered to be provided for that State by the Treaty, and is to be determined in consultation between each State and the Council of the League.

The Treaty proceeds to deal with the conditions of Ratification under which it shall take effect, and with the need of special Treaties, within the general Guarantee, required to ensure immediate support to States which, for historical or other reasons, are under special menace of attack. It is secured that these Treaties shall be not the expression of special sectional interests, but special applications of the general insurance

against aggressive war. The effective general Guarantee is essential if the system is not to lapse into a revival of the old group alliances.

II. Political and Economic Settlements.

i. Aaland Islands.

In this case the League was the instrument of the satisfactory solution of a very complicated problem.

In June, 1920, the Peace of Europe was threatened by the question of the sovereignty of the Aaland Islands, in dispute between Sweden and Finland, which has recently become an independent State. The difficulty was that the islanders are Swedish by race and inclination while the Islands are historically and strategically one with Finland. Great Britain exercised the "friendly right" of Article XI of the Covenant "to bring to the attention of the Council any circumstance whatever affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace." Sweden and Finland agreed to League arbitration. The League submitted the case to an impartial judicial enquiry and allocated the Islands to Finland, while granting their inhabitants a large measure of autonomy. The decision was accepted by both parties to the quarrel.

ii. Upper Silesia.

According to the Treaty of Versailles, a plebiscite was to determine whether the mixed districts of Upper Silesia should belong to Germany or to the re-established State of Poland. The question was one of the first

importance on account of the mineral and industrial wealth of the province; but any settlement was made difficult by internal disorders, an Allied occupation, a disputed plebiscite, and divergent views in the Supreme Council itself: until in August, 1921, the question was referred to the Council of the League.

The recommendations of the League were based on the plebiscite figures taken in conjunction with the geographical and economic conditions, and included economic clauses designed to prevent the political frontier from constituting a barrier to trade. The recommendations have been universally adopted. Any dispute between the German and Polish Governments as to the interpretation of the recommendations during the next fifteen years may be referred to the Council. In May, 1922, a German-Polish Conference was held at Geneva, under the auspices of the League, and unanimously settled certain outstanding details, of which the most important were the liquidation of German property and the protection of minorities.

iii. Albania.

Another State with unsettled frontiers was Albania, which awaited the decision of the Ambassadors' Conference appointed by the Principal Allied and Associated Powers. In September, 1921, troops of the neighbouring Serb-Croat-Slovene State advanced into Albania, and early in November the movement definitely took the form of an invasion. The Ambassadors' Conference had published their decision as to the frontiers of Albania on November 5th; and on November 7th the British Government called for

a special meeting of the Council to consider means of stopping the Serbian advance, including the possible application of Article XVI, which provides for economic blockade to be applied by the Assembly to the aggressor in a war. This produced an immediate effect; and when the Council met on November 17th the Serbian Representative announced that the troops of his country were retreating. Both sides accepted the frontiers determined by the Ambassadors' Conference, and under the auspices of the Council the detailed measures involved in these decisions were peacefully carried out. Thus the League ensured the independence of Albania and prevented a war which might have involved Italy and Central Europe.

iv. Vilna.

In September, 1920, Poland and Lithuania both appealed to the League to adjudicate upon a territorial dispute, over their rival claims to the town and district of Vilna. The League Council succeeded in stopping the hostilities which had broken out between the troops of the two countries, and in getting both parties to sign a provisional agreement respecting the territory. The Poles however broke this agreement two days after they had signed it, by invading and occupying Vilna.

The League's subsequent efforts to induce the two States to accept a settlement by agreement failed in consequence, for the Lithuanians demanded that the Poles should first retire from the disputed territory. The League Council strongly condemned the Polish action, but were not supported by the Allied Powers,

who alone could have enforced a decree of retirement upon Poland. The League therefore abandoned its attempts to settle the dispute in January, 1922. In March, 1923, the Allied Powers confirmed Poland in possession of the territory.

v. Communications and Transit.

Before the meeting of its first Assembly, the League arranged for an International Conference, which met in Paris in October, 1920, and suggested a series of measures for the simplification of Passport formalities, which have been adopted entirely or in part by a number of States. In the following year the League held an International Conference on a larger scale, in Barcelona, to consider remedies for the disorganization in communications and transit caused by the War. Among other measures, the Conference drafted a Convention on Freedom of Transit (signed by thirty-four States) and one on the Regime of Waterways of International Concern (signed by twenty-seven States). An important International Conference, to meet in October, 1923, will consider three Draft Conventions on Railways, Maritime Ports, and Electric Power.

vi. Brussels Financial Conference.

In September, 1920, an International Financial Conference was summoned at Brussels by the Council of the League to study the international financial situation. It consisted of expert economists and financiers from thirty-five States, including ex-enemy States.

One of the most important steps taken was the

drawing up of the "Ter Meulen" scheme for international credits, which would enable impoverished countries to borrow on the security of their assets from richer countries, through the agency of the League. The scheme contemplates the appointment of an International Commission of bankers and business men. Governments desiring to participate in the scheme are required to notify this Commission of the specific assets which they would assign as security for the commercial credits to be granted to their countries. After examination of these assets the Commission would authorize the Governments to issue Bonds to a gold value which it will determine, on stated conditions of redemption. These bonds, which the Government concerned might use itself or loan to its nationals, would be pledged to the exporters by the importers, and the exporters could then use them as security with their banks.

The work of the Brussels Conference was placed in the hands of two standing Committees of the League, the Financial and Economic Committees.

vii. Austrian Financial Reconstruction.

The greatest economic success of the League, however, has been the financial reconstruction of Austria, which was reduced to desperate straits and in immanent danger of collapse through failure of credit.

The case was referred to the League by the Supreme Council of the Allies in March, 1921, and was placed in the hands of the Financial Committee. The Committee soon worked out a scheme whereby all liens on Austrian assets are to be suspended for twenty years,

Austria is to undertake a programme of stringent financial reform, and several States, members of the League, are to guarantee a loan to Austria to be subscribed in the open market.

The effective application of the scheme was delayed for several months owing to the difficulty of securing the release of some of the foreign liens; but the scheme was ready for operation in October, 1922. The required releases, guarantees, and Austrian undertakings were obtained. A Commission of the League was appointed to supervise the fulfilment of the Austrian reforms and payment of interest on loan out of revenue. The scheme from the outset promised well, and the Austrian loan of thirty-two and a half million pounds sterling, was floated in June, 1923, and rapidly and largely over-subscribed.

III. Administrative and Judicial Work.

i. Danzig.

The Treaty of Versailles provides that Danzig shall become a Free City under the protection of the League of Nations, with a Constitution guaranteed by the League. The following are some of the most important provisions of the Constitution drawn up under protection of the League: German to be the official language, but the Polish population to be guaranteed freedom for the use of their mother-tongue; the Municipal Assembly to be representative of the whole people elected by universal direct adult suffrage and secret ballot; the Free City not to be used as a military or naval base, and manufacture of war material to be forbidden unless by consent of the League.

Danzig is linked to Poland by certain commercial and political bonds; and a High Commissioner was appointed by the League to mediate between the City and the Polish Government. The chief outstanding question, the control of the Vistula, was settled by arrangement at the Polish-Danzig Treaty in November, 1920. The League remains the final court of appeal in cases of Dispute.

ii. The Saar.

Under the Treaty of Versailles this territory, temporarily detached from Germany in compensation for the destruction of the French coal-mines, is to be governed for fifteen years by a League of Nations Commission in the capacity of Trustee for the population. All the mines of the Saar go to France, and after 1925 it is to be subject to the French customs regime. The Governing Commission consists of a Frenchman, a Belgian, a Dane, a Canadian, and a Saar inhabitant. German sovereignty is not destroyed but in abeyance. In 1935 the inhabitants of the Saar are to decide by plebiscite whether the Territory is to return to Germany, to go to France, or to remain under League rule.

From time to time the League has exercised its sovereignty over the Saar by criticism of the measures of the Governing Commission: notably in the case of the "Decree for the Maintainance of Law and Order" and in the case of the "Picketing Decree" (March, 1923), which were consequently withdrawn. An inquiry into the administration of the Territory, held by the Council in July, 1923, has resulted in improved governmental methods.

iii. Protection of Minorities.

The redistribution of Central Europe resulted in the establishment of several new States. Clauses safeguarding the civil, religious and linguistic rights of minorities were inserted in the Treaties which brought these States into being, and were applied also to the older States of Central and Southern Europe, Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece. All these clauses placed Minority Rights under the protection of the League of Nations.

This involves the privilege of an oppressed minority to petition the League Council, and the privilege of the Council to make representations to the Government concerned, and if necessary to take other action. In a final issue a question may be referred to the International Court of Justice, as lately in the case of the German settlers in the Polish province of Posen.

iv. International Court of Justice.

In accordance with Article XIV of the Covenant, the Council, with the aid of a special committee of eminent jurists evolved plans for the establishment of a Permanent Court of International Justice, which took effect in September, 1921. The Court is competent to adjudicate upon the interpretation of treaties, questions of international law and breaches of international obligations.

Judicial decisions may now be obtained on international disputes. This has been the case in the question of the French Nationality Decrees in Tunis and Morocco and their application to British subjects. Other cases before the Court have concerned the

selection of a Dutch Delegate for the Labour Conference, the competence of the International Labour Office with regard to labour conditions in agriculture and methods of agricultural production, and the refusal of the German Government in 1921 to allow passage to the S.S. "Wimbledon" through the Kiel Canal.

IV. Supervision of Mandated Areas.

In Article XXII of the Covenant it is laid down that "To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them, and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization." Accordingly, the tutelage of these peoples has been entrusted to the more advanced nations who will administer these countries as Mandatories on behalf of the League. The character of the Mandates must differ according to the stage of development of the people.

They are classed in three groups, known as "A," "B," and "C" Mandates. The first group consists of peoples almost fit for autonomy: under this category Mandates for Mesopotamia and Palestine have been allotted to Great Britain, and for Syria and the Lebanon to France. The second group consists of peoples requiring more complete government from the Mandatory: under this category, portions of East Africa, Togoland, and the Cameroons have been allotted to

Great Britain, Belgium, and France. The third group consists of peoples incapable of self-government, whose affairs are best administered under the laws of the Mandatory; as, for example, the populations of South West Africa, allotted to the Union of South Africa.

The territories do not pass in full possession to the Mandatories; the Council of the League approves the constitution under which they are ruled, and the Permanent Mandates Commission receives and examines a yearly report on their condition. The manner in which the Mandated areas are governed must depend in each case on circumstances. It varies from the Irak Treaty, which provides for temporary assistance by the British, and is tantamount to a pre-war Protectorate, to the absolute amalgamation of administration with that of the Mandatory Powers as in the case of German South West Africa. The new and common element is that the Mandatory Powers hold these countries, inhabited by backward races, not as regions to be exploited for the benefit of the European nations, but in a tutelage, subject to the controlling criticism of the opinion of the world.

V. Publication of Treaties.

In Article XVIII of the Covenant, it is laid down that "every treaty or international engagement entered into hereafter by any Member of the League shall be forthwith registered with the Secretariat and shall as soon as possible be published by it. No such treaty or international engagement shall be binding until so registered."

Almost 400 Treaties have already been published.

The Members of the League are pledged not to enter into engagements contrary to the terms of the Covenant and the registration controls this obligation, for Treaties inconsistent with the Covenant would not be registered, and those not registered are no longer held binding. Secret treaties are thus set outside the bounds of International law.

VI. Humanitarian Activities.

The humanitarian activities of the League arise partly from obligations stated in the Covenant and partly from results of the war.

i. International Health.

An active body of the League is the Health Organization, established under Article XXIII of the Covenant, which declares that the League will endeavour to take steps in matters of international concern for the prevention and control of disease. Through its Provisional Health Committee it works with the Office International d'Hygiène Publique in preparing Conventions to prevent the rise and spread of epidemics. For example, in 1922 a Commission of public health experts visited the Near East with a view to collecting information about the sanitary measures necessary in connection with the Mecca and Medina pilgrimages. The Health Organization has summoned conferences to effect the standardization of *sera*; it publishes international epidemiological intelligence and public health statistics; it organises the exchange of public health officials in order that they may become familiar with the administrative methods of other countries.

The League also sent an Epidemic Commission to the aid of Poland, during a widespread outbreak of typhus. The Commission utilized funds subscribed by the Member States to help the Poles to establish a *cordon sanitaire* on their Eastern frontier. Recognizing, however, that the epidemics of Eastern Europe must be attacked at their source, the League in 1922 summoned a Health Conference at Warsaw, to consider measures against disease in Russia. A plan of campaign was drawn up; but as the necessary funds have not been subscribed, it has not yet been carried out.

Nevertheless it is due to the work of the League of Nations that there have been no European epidemics on a scale commensurate with that of the war.

ii. Traffic in Noxious Drugs.

Article XXIII of the Covenant also entrusts the League with general supervision over the execution of agreements with regard to the traffic in opium and other dangerous drugs.

The control of this traffic is a problem of great complexity. The Opium Convention which formed part of the Peace Treaties, has been ratified by forty-three States; the system of import certifications has been adopted by twenty-seven. Control of the legitimate trade in drugs, and penalizing of smuggling, is however but "a patch on rotten stuff." The evil lies in their production, which far exceeds the "legitimate" or scientific and medical needs of the world. It is useless for India and China to collaborate in crushing poppy-cultivation, when in Turkey the manufacture

of opium is uncontrolled, and when Europe supplies quantities of smuggled morphia to China. The only hope of solving the problem is through the international action envisaged by the League, which is now taking steps to ascertain the legitimate needs of the world and to limit the production of drugs to that amount.

iii. Traffic in Women and Children.

Under the same Article of the Covenant, the League has set up its Commission for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children. In 1904 and 1910 various States signed Conventions aimed at the prevention of the traffic, but some had not ratified them. Moreover the end of the war, and the removal of barriers to travel, saw a revival of the trade.

The League therefore sent a questionnaire to all Governments on their legislation on this subject, held a conference to consider it, and drafted a new Convention which was adopted by the Second Assembly in September, 1921. This Convention has been signed by thirty-three States. It is aimed at the better protection of women and children, and at the penalizing of persons engaged in the traffic.

iv. Deported Women and Children.

Deportation of many thousands of Christian women and children was one of the unhappy results of the war in the near East. Greek and Armenian women, enclosed in Turkish harems, and children in orphanages, were forced to adopt Islam and subjected to misery and ill-treatment. In 1921 the League appointed a Commission of Inquiry of Missionaries resident in

Turkey to ascertain the whereabouts of these victims. Despite the difficulties presented by the harem system, and the efforts made by the Turks to prevent the discovery of the race of the children, large numbers have been rescued.

v. Prisoners of War.

The war left thousands of prisoners immured in remote camps. Many had been captured as early as 1915, and interned in parts of Central Europe and especially in Russia and Siberia. In April, 1920, the League Council appointed Dr. Nansen to organize the return of prisoners. With great skill and patience Dr. Nansen overcame the difficulties of the task, and arrived at an agreement with the Soviet Government which enabled him to establish three lines of communication, across Russia to the Baltic, from Vladivostock to Trieste, and across the Black Sea. By these routes, with the aid of money subscribed by the Member States and charities, he restored over 427,000 prisoners to their own countries.

vi. Relief of Refugees.

The end of the war made it possible for many of the great masses of refugees scattered through Europe to seek their homes again. The gates of one frontier only were still locked against exiles. Those who fled from the Russian Revolution, could not return to Russia under the Soviet regime. Moreover the transportation of the defeated White Armies to Constantinople, and other places beyond the confines of Russia, cast a further horde of Russians unemployed and destitute upon an alien world.

In 1921 the League recognized that international co-operation was necessary to support them, and summoned a Conference to discuss how best they could be absorbed by other countries. Dr. Nansen was appointed League High Commissioner for Refugees, and with the assistance of Sir Samuel Hoare and Colonel Procter organized relief at Constantinople, where the distress was greatest. The task of the League has been to induce States to allow the passage of refugees who have no country, and no passports, and to settle them in regions where they may earn their livings and become independent.

Recently a vast new problem has been introduced into this work by the multitudes of Christian refugees who have fled before the advance of the Turks. In July, 1923, the Council adopted a Report of the Financial Committee, containing a scheme for an International Loan under the administration of the League, to settle such refugees in Greece on the land and in other productive employments.

vii. Intellectual Co-operation.

The Committee on Intellectual Co-operation, composed of world-famous scholars, such as Madame Curie, M. Bergson, and Professor Gilbert Murray, was constituted in May, 1922. It has undertaken to help the intellectual work of these countries in which the educated classes, and consequently the arts and sciences, are threatened with extinction, and to draw Universities and learned bodies into closer relations.

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